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1961/08/29

(The Bundy memo ...)

SECRET

August 29, 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Plan for Southeast Asia

The attached Plan for Southeast Asia sets forth suggestions for: (a) continuing and expanding our efforts to obtain a peaceful solution based on a Souvanna government; (b) a course of action to be pursued if we are successful in achieving a peaceful solution; and (c) if we are not successful in achieving a peaceful solution, courses of military and other action in the event that (1) the Communists resume their offensive in Laos, or (2) while not clearly resuming their offensive, they continue their "whittling away" action.

These courses are to a large extent interrelated as it is difficult to obtain Communist agreement to a peaceful solution unless we confront them with the alternative of our willingness to take more forceful action if a peaceful solution is not achieved. Correspondingly, it is difficult to obtain the cooperation of some of our allies, such as the Thais and the Viet-Namese, in seeking a peaceful solution unless they feel some confidence that we are prepared to consider more forceful action in the event a satisfactory peaceful solution is not achieved.

The principal points upon which your decision is needed today are as follows:

1. Authorization immediately to undertake talks with our SEATO allies both bilaterally and with the SEATO Council representatives in Bangkok, and also with South Vietnam, as appropriate, in which we would explore their receptivity to:

(a) enlarging the concept of SEATO Plan 5 so that if the Communists renew their offensive and the decision is made to implement Plan 5 the objective would be the expulsion of Communist forces from all of Southern Laos and the Mekong River line, including the Luang Prabang area.

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By MMK NARA, Date 6/11/99

The establishment of such an objective would be conditional upon the willingness of Thailand and South Vietnam, and to a lesser extent possibly some other SEATO countries such as the Philippines, Pakistan, Australia and New Zealand, to commit additional forces to Plan 5.

(b) in the event neither a peaceful settlement is achieved nor has there been a sufficient renewal of the offensive by the Communists to justify consideration of implementing SEATO Plan 5, the carrying out of a SEATO exercise in Thailand about October 10 emplc ground combat troops, supported by tactical air units and, on completion of the exercise, leaving behind in Thailand a SEATO command and communications "shell" prepared on a contingency basis to expedite the implementation of SEATO Plan 5.

(c) undertaking add ional rotational training of SEATO combat units in Thailand.

(d) introducing into Thailand a SEATO River Patrol along the line of the Mekong, and

(e) declaring at an appropriate time a SEATO charter yellow or charter blue condition.

2. Immediately increasing our mobile training teams in Laos and seeking Thai agreement to supplying an equal number of Thais for the same purpose.

3. Immediately increasing by 2,000 the number of Meos being supported so as to bring the total up to the level of 11,000.

4. Authorizing photo reconnaissance by Thai or "sanitized" United States aircraft over all of Laos. (This has for the most part been suspended during the cease-fire.)

5. As soon as the details are worked out with ICA and Congressional action has been taken on the aid bill, a letter from you to Sarit offering a $150,000,000 line of credit.

Dean Rusk